

## Message Text

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ORIGIN OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 XMB-04 COME-00 /024 R

DRAFTED BY OPIC/F BMHENDERSON

APPROVED BY EB/IFD/ OIA:RJSMITH

AF/C:JHDIGGS

EB/IFD/OIA:DHSTEBBING

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P 232200Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 173833

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN

SUBJECT: VISIT U.S. BUSINESS REPS RE RICE PROJECT

PASS TO SCHLENKER FROM HENDERSON

1. DAVID BUTCHART AND GRATTAN COLVIN OF A AND B AGRIBUSINESS CORP. ARRIVING JULY 24 DOUALA 6:15 A.M. VIA CAMAIR 73 TRANSIT TO YAOUNDE VIA CAMAIR 743 AT 7:45 A.M. FOR FIVE DAY REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL AND MARKETING ASPECTS OF PROPOSED RICE PROJECT IN MBANDJOCK. APPRECIATE ALL EMBASSY ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE WHILE A AND B IS IN CAMEROON.

2. COLVIN AND BUTCHART HAVE SPENT TWO DAYS IN WASHINGTON MEETING WITH NOMO AND TCHETGEN, OPIC, EX-IM, AND WORLD BANK. THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN FULL BACKGROUND ON THE PROJECT AND ARE PURELY ON A FACT FINDING MISSION AT THIS POINT. A AND B IS A NEWLY FORMED AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT SUBSIDIARY OF ALEXANDER AND BALDWIN, ONE OF THE LARGEST SUGAR COMPANIES IN HAWAII, FAVORABLY KNOWN TO OPIC. PRESIDENT OF A AND B, WAYNE RICHARDSON, WAS ONE OF THE COMPANIES APPROACHED IN LATE JUNE BY HENDERSON ABOUT POSSIBLE INVESTMENT IN RICE

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PROJECT. A AND B READ GRATA STUDY AND, LIKE OPIC, FOUND

MANY SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES. SUBSEQUENTLY OLYMPIO CONTACTED RICHARDSON AND URGED VISIT TO CAMEROON. OLYMPIO AND QUINTANA PLAN TO MEET A AND B REPRESENTATIVES IN YAOUNDE AND

ESCORT THEM DURING THEIR STAY. HOWEVER, A AND B HAS NO REPEAT NO RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY PARTIES IN GRATA. A AND B MERELY SEEKING TO VERIFY THE VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT.

3. TCHETGEN OF SNI STRESSED IN MEETINGS WITH OPIC AND A AND B THAT SNI'S SOLE INTEREST IS IN FINANCING A VIABLE PROJECT; SUCH PROJECT MAY OR MAY NOT INCLUDE GRATA. SNI HAS NO OBLIGATION TO LATTER. TCHETGEN WILL TELEX SNI TO ASSIGN ZOLEKO OF SNI TO THE PROJECT WHILE A AND B REPS IN YAOUNDE. APPRECIATE EMBASSY BRIEF ZOLEKO ON A AND B BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR TRIP. A AND B WILL VISIT PROJECT SITE IF POSSIBLE, MINAG AND IRAT. MAY OR MAY NOT BE HELPFUL FOR EMBASSY TO BRIEF THESE PARTIES. A AND B REPS ALSO HOPE TO SPEND SOME TIME NOT IN PRESENCE OF GRATA PEOPLE WITH EMBASSY DURING THEIR STAY.

4. FYI: OPIC HAS ALSO CONTACTED TWO OTHER CAPABLE COMPANIES WHO HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE PROJECT AND WHO ALSO SEE THE NEED TO HAVE A THOROUGH AND RELIABLE FEASIBILITY STUDY. DEPENDING ON A AND B'S CONCLUSIONS (THEY MAY, FOR EXAMPLE, BE UNCONVINCED THAT RICE WILL GROW IN MBANDJOCK), PROGRAM IS THAT SNI WILL SOLICIT FORMAL PROPOSALS FROM SEVERAL COMPANIES TO PREPARE FEASIBILITY STUDY, MAKE INVESTMENT IN AND MANAGE THE PROJECT. FUNDING OF STUDY IS NOT DETERMINED. OPIC IS STILL INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE STUDY PREPARED BY GRATA. A AND B IS AWARE OF THIS AS ARE THE OTHER COMPANIES WE CONTACTED. THEREFORE A AND B TRIP OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO OPIC-SNI EFFORTS.

5. FOR MITHOEFER: IF TIME PERMITS WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR MEETING A AND B TEAM AT AIRPORT ON THEIR WAY OUT OF

CAMEROON. THEY ARRIVE DOUALA FROM YAOUNDE ON JULY 29 CAMAIR 743 AT 9:15 A.M.; DEPART AIR AFRIQUE 511 FOR LAGOS AT 1:00 P.M.

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6. A AND B REPS NEW TO AFRICAN BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE AND NON-FRENCH SPEAKING. HENDERSON STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THEY HIRE FRENCH INTERPRETER; COULD EMBASSY PLEASE SUGGEST PEOPLE TO THEM. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BUSINESSMEN, RICE, VISITS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE173833  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** F BMHENDERSON  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750254-1086  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750728/aaaaazfj.tel  
**Line Count:** 112  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN OPIC  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** CollinP0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 FEB 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 FEB 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2004 by CollinP0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VISIT U.S. BUSINESS REPS RE RICE PROJECT PASS TO SCHLENKER FROM HENDERSON  
**TAGS:** EFIN, US  
**To:** YAOUNDE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006